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ABSTRACT

Self-assessment occurred daily in the act of learning in a professional writing class, which met in a computer-networked writing classroom. Strategies for self-assessment were based on James Britton's "expressive writing" and Peter Elbow's believing game. Students recorded and assessed this active learning in a Writer's Notebook (a journal with a neutral name). The Writer's Notebook provided a place for them to discover, to experiment, and to make meaning for themselves and about professional writing; to organize their ideas; and to see progress as professional writers. Its entries also included metacognition, cognition, and feelings. Students responded to five types of prompts: metacognition, practice writing, response to reading, dialogue, and assessment. These prompts were designed primarily to facilitate writing to learn rather than to serve as prewriting for final products. The teacher's reading and responding to content reinforced students' ownership of their writing and encouraged them. Influenced by the Adlerian distinction of encouragement and praise, the language of the believing game became significant. The Writer's Notebook also became a dialogue journal. As self-assessment continued during the semester, students increased their self-esteem, empowered themselves, increased their confidence about their writing and computers, developed control of their writing behavior and feelings, and simultaneously improved their professional writing. (Appendixes consist of a Writer's Notebook guide, prompts, and a handout entitled "What Is a Response?") (Author/MM)

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Students' Self-Assessment

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Abstract

Students' Self-Assessment

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Students recorded and assessed this active learning in a Writer's Notebook, a journal with a neutral name. The Writer's Notebook provided a place for them to discover, to experiment, and to make meaning for themselves and about professional writing; to organize their ideas; and to see progress as professional writers. Its entries also included metacognition, cognition, and feelings.

Students responded to five types of prompts: metacognition, practice writing, response to reading, dialogue, and assessment. These prompts were designed primarily to facilitate writing to learn rather than to serve as prewriting for final products, although some assignments were, indeed, prewriting.

My reading and responding to content reinforced students' ownership of their writing and encouraged them. Influenced by the Adlerian distinction of encouragement and praise, the language of the believing game became significant. The Writer's Notebook also became a dialogue journal.

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Students' Self-Assessment

> JOHN MAYHER Part of the assessment issue is to find ways of assessing whether or not students really understand what they're supposed to be learning rather than to be able to regurgitate some pretreated set of words that aren't necessarily theirs.
> JAMES BRITTON Yes. It also means seeing the teacher in a role other than that of examiner, in which teachers are using writing to test whether students have learned something, rather than using it as a means of hastening that learning. (Mayher, Lester, & Pradl, 122)

Today I would like to describe how self-assessment "hastened learning" and empowered students in a professional writing class. Students in the class had completed at least one college writing class were at least juniors and had a diversity of majors and career interests. The class met in a computer-networked writing classroom. Initially students viewed the course as product-centered and focused on clear, correct, and concise forms of writing, which I would transmit to them appropriately adapted to their individual career choices. My students appeared to be textbook examples of the banker's model of education, for they viewed knowledge as a storehouse of the known, education as something they "received" passively. In addition, they evidenced both writing and computer anxiety and wanted to write as little as possible.

However, my students' initial perceptions of the course neither reflected current research about writing nor accurately simulated writing in the workplace. A more effective model for a professional writing class comes from research on actual writing in the workplace (Goswami and Odell; Tebeaux). The new context focuses on process rather than product and emphasizes strategies for rhetorical situations rather than rigid forms. It also incorporates complex and active communication, which includes writing, reading, listening, speaking, computers, and collaboration.

Self-assessment helped students move into and succeed in that new context for professional writing. Strategies for self-assessment were based on James Britton's expressive writing and

Peter Elbow's believing game. At the end of the semester, students enthusiastically contributed their responses to those strategies as evidence for this paper, and I thank them.

Expressive Writing

Expressive writing has improved learning and strengthened writing in a diversity of disciplines from kindergarten through college. Expressive writing, James Britton notes, is the core from which all other writing develops It is "thinking aloud on paper," the language of written speech, which can show how learning takes place as a person shapes ideas with words. Knowledge, according to Britton, is a process of knowing rather than a storehouse of the known. Expanding on Britton's idea, Janet Emig explains writing as a "unique mode of learning--not merely valuable, not merely special--but unique." She identifies four major characteristics of writing that parallel effective learning strategies:

1. Writing involves hand, eye, and both sides of the brain simultaneously.
2. Writing builds in self-provided response.
3. Writing requires making connections and constructing meaning.
4. Writing is active and personal.

In addition, writers who use expressive writing improve both their learning and their transactional writing (Fulwiler 13).

Elbow's Believing Game

Elbow's believing game hastened that learning for my students. Described in detail in "The Believing Game and the Doubting Game," the appendix of *Writing without Teachers*, the believing game provides a context of finding truth through a "long, slow discipline involving growth and increased flexibility." (*Teachers*, 176). It includes believing what others say, "seeing through their eyes", actively listening with empathy rather than arguing defensively, "actually experiencing their point of view from the inside, not just analyzing it," making metaphors, and delaying closure. Its opposite, the doubting game, focuses on finding truth by disbelieving, arguing, and pushing for closure. The two become a dialectic. Playing the believing game, Elbow notes, can "help produce an atmosphere of safety and trust that permits others to see and speak better" (*Power*,

produce an atmosphere of safety and trust that permits others to see and speak better" (*Power*, 270).

The believing game, which we played both in talking and in writing, helped to establish our computer classroom as a safe environment for writing. It also provided a way to develop empathy, to get beyond the self, a real difficulty for many students in professional writing. Playing it also offered us a way to practice with audiences beyond answering the standard audience analysis questions posed in the textbook.

Writer's Notebook

Each student recorded this active learning for the semester in a Writer's Notebook, a journal with a neutral name and contents somewhere between emotional confessional and cognitive commentary. The Writer's Notebook provided a place for them to discover, to experiment, and to make meaning for themselves and about professional writing, to organize ideas, and to see progress as professional writers (see "Appendix A").

Its entries also included metacognition, cognition, and feelings. When students develop awareness of their writing behavior and feelings and learn to manage their processes, they write better. Susan McLeod, in arguing for including the affective domain in the teaching of writing, calls for teachers to "help students value their own abilities" (430) and "help with strategic self-management" (433). Furthermore, as Alice Brand notes,

> Cognitive theories of writing study acts of conscious, deliberate, information processing by which writers determine what they want to accomplish and how they want to accomplish it. These are ambitious and admirable objectives. Their authors are not wrong, just incomplete. The distinctive freedom of affect from attentive control, its speed and the range and depth of language that results suggest something special about its influence on writing. (441)

Students wrote in their Writer's Notebooks daily, so that daily writing would become a habit, rather than an all-night effort two or three times during the semester, as many students reported they produced journals for other classes. Earning credit for daily writing was easy,

provided students met the daily deadlines. Noting that Isaac Asimov and many other professional writers make time to write daily, Robert Boice advocates productivity for students, which he defines as "habitual writing and, if necessary, forced writing," in addition to process and product. He also observed that "Failure to teach good habits of productivity seems to condemn many students to a future of difficulty in completing written tasks and of frustration in gaining professional advancement" (479).

Thus I designed a sequence of prompts for the Writer's Notebook (see "Appendix B"). Their primary purpose was to facilitate writing to learn rather than prewriting for final products, although some assignments were, indeed, prewriting. In a sense, these prompts were my "assisted invitation" (IA Richards) to students to make meaning daily and subsequently reflect on and possibly revise that meaning throughout the semester. Every day thus presented an opportunity for assessment in the act of learning.

There were five types of assignments: metacognition, practice writing, response to reading, dialogue, and assessment.

Metacognition assignments explored learning. Following the believing game, we described in both talking and in writing. For example, the second day began by personalizing learning. We listed successful learning experiences, then analyzed each for vehicle(s) of learning: talking, writing, listening, reading, experiencing. Our catalog of these successful experiences on the board showed that the lowest number of them occurred in school and involved writing. Speculating why elicited some characteristics of the doubting game: "The red marks on my paper were discouraging." "The teacher made me feel that I wasn't a writer, but my mother always put my writing on the refrigerator." Then each person chose one of their successes and freewrote about it to retrieve it fully. Many were concerned with sending and receiving letters. The few that took place in school carried someone else's judgment of an A, usually from hard work. Then we considered how active or passive we felt in the successful experience, using metaphors of making a new map or being filled up with knowledge. At the end of class, students summarized their learning. Brian explained

> Today I learned how powerful writing can be as a tool for learning. Before I just considered writing more as a response to learning. I still need to learn how to use it to best advantage and also how to keep from getting stressed out when confronted with a writing assignment.

I rejoiced at his active voice. Apprehensively, Todd wrote,

> I learned that my writing experiences were probably a little different than what everyone else was expressing. . . . My writing learning experience came through a classroom not friendship letter, but I realize now that something like that may be possible.

Responses to the other four types of prompts also produced more than the usual "homework" or class work, for these were not teacher questions with known answers, but choices for making meaning. Students also included their personal connections and their assessment of what they did and why.

Practice writing invited the student to experiment with writing in various contexts, to play with language, to try out different audiences and purposes for the same material. The prompt for September 20 is illustrative:

> Choosing <u>one</u> of the good things that's happened at USD this year, write three letters (just the body; not to worry about form now) to <u>one person</u> from each of these three different audiences about the same good thing. Some audience examples:
>
> <u>General Public</u>: editor of (hometown) newspaper
>
> <u>Subordinates and Clients</u>: an elementary or junior high student
>
> <u>Bosses and Superiors</u>: *one* faculty member, department chair, dean, vice president *or* president
>
> As you reread your letters, mark and label specific examples of what you did to adapt the same material to three different audiences. What did you learn?

The "good things" of this assignment had been part of a brainstorming and clustering talk in class, which had elicited comments about the relative ease of complaining as opposed to complimenting;

i. e., the doubting game was easier than the believing game and also more characteristic of academia.

Response to reading assured that students made their own meaning. Through writing their own responses, rather than responding to teacher questions, students read and learned actively. As Ann Berthoff explained, ". . . critical reading can be a way of coming to know, of learning to learn, and thus discovering some important things about writing, but *only* if it is taught as a means of making meaning" (167). However, to reduce anxiety, I did provide suggestions, a list of possibilities adapted from Mayher, Lester and Pradl (see "Appendix C"). Active learning provided diverse responses to revising. Carol connected with past learning and grades:

> Oh boy, did this chapter slap me in the face--and hard. I always thought revising meant changing words, adding commas, eliminating sentence fragments, correcting spelling or just recopying the first draft. At least that's all I ever did when I revised a paper. I'm really glad this chapter is in the book. I think it's great. I would probably have never changed voice, paid any attention to prepositions, checked the be verb or any of those other things. I've never been told to look for them and change them if needed. I guess a lot of teachers grade on the mechanics of a paper so that's what students look for. . . . Once I'm familiar with the checklist I can begin to keep it in my mind as I write my first draft but still use it for revising.

In contrast, Scott's response focused on the practicality of time:

> I was also surprised to see that even the professionals live for revision. I thought that the professional writer would hate revising just as much as I do. Probably even more! The PAFEO [acronym emphasized throughout the text; it stands for Purpose, Audience, Format, Evidence, Organization] checklist was mentioned again in this chapter. They must really want us to use this thing. I mean, I know that it will work but doesn't this process take a lot of time. What if you had to get a memo out in about ten minutes. I don't know, but the stuff that this book talks about takes alot more than ten minutes. It could be possible that with practice you will become faster, but for

> ten minutes. It could be possible that with practice you will become faster, but for right now this confuses me.

Both students were learning actively, connecting personally affectively and cognitively, as they thought aloud on paper and played the believing game. Through writing a response of their choice, students actively used the textbook, which formerly most read as little of as possible and tended to retain very little, for making new maps. Class discussions began with their comments and questions, not silence or apologies or excuses for not reading assignments.

Dialogue was an "assisted invitation" to make a new arrangement of my responses and reflect on them, along with their Writer's Notebook text, to continue the conversation. The assignment made the assessment process recursive. One student continued a dialogue and revealed her freshman English instructor playing the doubting game. The student had accepted her instructor's verdict that she could not write, which turned out to be self-fulfilling prophecy until this class.

However, perhaps because moving all the responses to one page produced a more compelling text, most students chose to assess the responses themselves and how the believing game affected them. As Scott explained,

> Your responses make me think even more about what I have written. I see it one way before I turn it in and when I get it back, I can see it from a whole new point of view. I gained confidence through your comments. The comments never said that I was off base, but rather that I was coming along and doing something right.

Lian commented that, although she learned from reading, she discovered "learning actually takes place when I am writing down my responses during practice writing assignments." She had discovered Britton's "shaping at the point of utterance."

Assessment prompts were overtly directed at self-assessment. At the beginning of the semester, assessment was an assisted invitation to "take stock," ask questions, and set goals for the semester. The midsemester and final exams asked students to reflect on their own Writer's Notebook texts (something many students said they had never done in an academic context) and to

assess their learning, using their earlier writings for evidence. The first assignment showed that students needed to develop reflection, for ten of them could not fill a page. Liz's response, which did fill a page, shows how profoundly this course differed from others:

> How is it possible, after years of indoctrination, to not worry about the mechanics of writing? Just sitting here responding to the question my mind was working to phrase the question without using the word "you" I'm sure it isn't meant for us to forget what we have learned. Do you mean that we should worry now about what we say than how we say it, at least the first time?
>
> I'm not sure I know what is meant by a handbook. Is it something like a style book, or is it a different sort of thing?
>
> Are there ways to do use non-discriminatory language that aren't cumbersome and don't sound like you're trying not to discriminate?
>
> Will we be having tests in this class, or will we be graded (for midterm and final) on special writing assignments?
>
> How do you get out of the habit of writing like you're writing for a professor? What I mean is, knowing that I am going to writing something for a class changes the whole way I think. Maybe I'm looking at this in the wrong way though. Perhaps, writing in a job setting is much like writing in a classroom setting. Only instead of writing the way I know a professor will like (which is something you learn during the course of a class) I would be writing the way a superior wants me to write It could be that I just think too much about all of it and would have a much easier time if I worried less about pleasing who I'm writing for and worried more about whether I like how it sounded. In fact, I'm even having trouble writing this assignment because I'm thinking so much about what I want to say, and how I want to say it. I think that I really need to loosen up about this.

Here is assessment as making meaning, for the student asks questions, poses answers, and makes choices that move her from knowledge as monolithic to knowledge as plural and situational. True

to the believing game, assessment here is not a final judgment, but possibilities for further learning.

Reading and Responding

Self-assessment would not have occurred as often or as enthusiastically without daily communication between professor and student. I believed I was a coach training writers according to Elbow's believing game. I believed they would improve through a caring, encouraging, and honest believing game response. To further encourage students to write freely, I told them that anything they did not want me to read to mark DNR and I would honor that. Britton's statement that "All teacher responses are evaluative (31) did not preclude Elbow's believing game, for my commentary in the Writer's Notebook aimed for ongoing dialogue to enhance, support, and encourage learning and improve writing.

The expressive writing was theirs. I responded to it on post-it notes to reinforce that ownership, to show that I did not intrude into it. Although I had told students I would respond weekly, I actually responded each day, as the ongoing process of learning and revising caught me in its energizing dynamics. I read and responded to twenty-one pages in about forty-five minutes to two hours. Students, too, were pulled into its dynamics. As Joel reported on the final assessment,

> When reading this [collection of responses] my first reply is the pleasure of getting feedback on each assignment. After reading the note my nerves are relaxed and as a result makes it easier to write a response the next time around. Your little yellow notes have definitely facilitated my learning.

To facilitate learning, language for playing the believing game became significant. For each note, I aimed to include the three dimensions McCarthy, Meier, and Rinderer deem important: focus on the immediate meaning-making, emphasis of the positive, and consideration of evolving dialogues with each individual student (127). I also used the Adlerian distinction between encouragement and praise, which appears to parallel Elbow's distinction of describing and arguing. Encouragement, the Adlerians stress, fosters self-reliance, self-direction, and cooperation, while

praise can promote reliance on the teacher, other-direction (pleasing behavior), and competition. Like argument, the basis of the doubting game, the language of praise is judgmental and usually tells students how marvelous they or their works are. Because praise is based on achievement, it communicates to students that they will be valued if they please their teachers. Furthermore, by its nature, the language of praise does not really permit everyone to succeed, for it discriminates. In contrast, the language of encouragement is non-discriminatory. It describes specific actions and expresses appreciation for progress or contribution. It communicates to students that the value of their actions is separate from their value as persons. Students follow up an encouraging comment with their own judgments, in thought or in writing (Madden 143-145). For example, in a response to reading I wrote, "Maggi--Oh, those textbooks that were hard to understand. I remember them, too. I agree--this is a chapter to think about. How are you dealing with pace now? Then, according to Adlerians, Maggi would infer from my response that I liked her work, even though it may not be perfect, and she will feel positive about it. More important, the judgment is hers, rather than mine. It is part of the student's active process of making meaning.

Elbow states that the believing game is difficult and is played along with the doubting game. Sometimes I had to consciously translate the language of doubting to the language of believing. For example, in the response above, I first wrote "You're right," which seems to give closure, rather than "I agree," which supports and keeps the question open for other views. As the semester progressed, I learned by reflection how describing is less threatening than questioning (I could also revise the example to describe; i.e., "I wonder how you're dealing with pace.") and how to write my own reader-based responses to each individual student. Sometimes responses naturally followed; sometimes when I reread one, I saw new possibilities in language ; the note made revision easy.

Each day I also learned from student writing. Ten of them not filling a page for the first assignment, despite my talking in class about reflection, in a way, was a test of how I would stick to the guidelines and in another way a need for fleshing out the prompt to teach reflection. Their lack of writing sensitized me to their writing and computer apprehension. Most of the problems

with computer use worked out through practice, usually with help of the believing game and another student. Most students did not like to compose at the computer initially. Early transactional writing was chaotic. The beginning report assignment came in second to homecoming. As Elbow claims, the actual process of learning through the believing game was slow, particularly on major map changes, such as reader-based writing and an audience different from teacher as examiner, concepts that required not only knowing a concept but also internalizing the concept. To the students and to me, reflection on what was learned, how it was learned, and what it means was valuable.

The Final Self-Assessment

The final self-assessment revealed that self-assessment strategies had succeeded.

1. Students enjoyed writing.

2. Students increased their confidence and reduced their writing anxiety. As Greg expressed it,

> I made it to class each day, put in a lot of valuable time in completing all of my assignments, and learned to become a professional writer. I had told myself at the beginning of the year that the one thing I wanted to be able to do when I finished this course was to be able to write something and know I had did a good job. Upon completing this course I find that I have that confidence within me and it feels great.

Andre felt "much more comfortable with just sitting down and writing than [he] did before. . . . Feeling comfortable . . . began the first day with an in-class assignment about each student's name."

Sometimes the comfort showed in students' willingness to write about problems they had experienced. Using the language of the believing game, Andre continued,

> I think I would have like to seen more critical comments on the communication of my writing. For example after receiving my report back I was really pleased with the comments that I got because they gave me directions. You had indicated at one point that the writing I had done on one page sounded like a journal entry. I thought that

was very beneficial and was very true. You emphasized in several parts where what I was writing to you was very unclear. That was helpful. I would have liked to explore those ideas more as to how to shorten those ideas down so that they were more clear and concise (that more my problem than yours).

Greg pointed out the value of talking with me about his concerns:

> One aspect of the class that confused me was the grading. It wasn't how the grades were assigned but knowing how you were doing in the class along the way. One class period could be set aside midway through the semester where each student would come in and meet with you for about ten minutes. The student would be able to see how he or she was doing and you could provide some constructive criticism for the student. I think it would help the students to put their mind at ease and show them if they should be working harder or if they are putting the time and effort needed toward the class to come out on top.

Some students attributed their confidence to the believing game. As Lian phrased it, "Your belief that everyone can write, either professionally or academically really helped me to believe that I CAN WRITE! I have finished this particular marathon. I am sure that there are more to come but I am prepared for them. "Scott proclaimed,

> I might not be the best professional writer to emerge but I can now at least hold my own. I have gained the confidence and skills needed to be a better writer. . . .All in all I think that it would be very difficult to become anything less then a very good writer in this class. With the material taught in here and the constant practice, you can only get better. I think that professional writing is a frame of mind. Once you have confidence in your frame of mind, you can accomplish anything. This is not only true for writing but for anything. All it takes is practice. With practice comes excellence.

3. Students increased their confidence and skill with the computer. Liz reported, "I run the machines without thinking about what I'm doing. Sometimes I am even able to help other people use the Macs." Here is an illustration of the cooperation that characterized our

reported, "I run the machines without thinking about what I'm doing. Sometimes I am even able to help other people use the Macs." Here is an illustration of the cooperation that characterized our class.

4. Students increased their internal locus of control of their writing and writing behavior. Liz accepted her stress in a new way:

> I think that I will always have stress when I write because I am just as compulsive about grades or how other people see my work as I am about correctness. This stress is just something I will have to learn to deal with. I have noticed that the stress is different now though. I can't prove this from my writer's notebook because it is just something I feel. I used to get tense because I didn't know if I was a good writer. This class has given me the confidence to believe that I am. I now realize that spending three or four weeks on a paper doesn't mean I'm not good at it; it just means that is the method that works the best for me.

Mary Kay emerged in charge of her writing:

> My own personal satisfaction in my writing is taking precedence over the demand to write by others. I wasn't totally satisfied with the results of my report. It was a competent effort with 16/20 points, but it is an important subject regarding my future. I will continue it, for ME.

5. Students thought consciously about learning. At the end of the course students could express a context for the semester. For David, the course at first was a series of assignments; later it took on a shape of its own. He described, "When I started writing in the notebook, I looked at each individual day as a separate academic assignment. Later on in the year, one day led to the next day and I began to think of all the different papers as one thing." Similarly, Andre noted that "Each assignment after [the first day] began to become more narrow and more focused on the writing process itself." Greg expressed a sense of making a new map: "The thing I liked most about the book was that it did not make you feel like there was a lot of material you didn't know. It seemed to cite your old writing ways and build on them. An A+ for

the text." Scott used PAFEO "without even knowing it. The book said that I would do this, I just didn't believe it." He had internalized a complex concept.

Liz categorized her learning:

> I have learned on two levels in this class. One level was learning to write for the world of business; learning the necessary formats and procedures. The second level was learning about me. The practice writing has allowed me to learn very important things about how I learn--which I thought was impossible at the beginning of class--and to learn about how I write.

6. Students valued daily writing for reading, learning, and relaxing.

As Joel explained,

> In most classes students put off the readings causing them not to fully understand the topic being discussed. By you assigning a response to be written on each chapter the student can't put off reading the chapter which in turn increases his understanding of the chapter.

Andre personalized, admitting,

> To be real honest, the responses to the reading really forced me to read thebook. Then required me to think and understand what the book was saying to me. I probably would not have read it (or at least only read a small portion of it) without having to do the assignments.

Carol, who saw daily writing as a way "to keep students caught up on their reading," also commented on learning: "The textbook is helpful, but I learned more in the classroom. The text helped in areas that are either black or white, but being in class helped in the gray areas." Liz rejoiced that "the biggest cause of my new relaxation has been doing the practice writings. Writing every day made me become comfortable with how I write. This has made me sound much less uptight in my writing."

7. Students felt both their cognitive and affective learning transferred beyond this course. Mary Kay celebrated that

through writing that my personal confidence spreads throughout my whole day and touches everything I do. I feel more like a competent adult because of this turn. It has been a significant change noticed and commented upon by others. It's great for me, my tips at work, and my equestrian practices. I hope I don't lose it.

As Curt explained "Before this class the thought of an essay test used to make me shudder, however now I feel very comfortable answering essay questions. Furthermore, my performance on tests involving essay questions over the semester has improved." Internalizing a major strategy astonished Scott:

> My ultimate test though was my report on the Macintosh lab and a paper that I wrote for my Marketing class. In both instances I used every skill that I learned from this class. The one that shocked me the most was how I implemented the*"PAFEO""* process. In both cases, before I started to write the paper, I started to write an outline on how the paper would flow. When I was done, I found that I added another part to my outline. This new part included what my purpose was, who my audience was, what type of format to use, what type of evidence I had and what type I should get, and the rest of the outline conformed to the organization. I was pretty amazed by this.

Liz summarized what many others also reported: "Learning how I write is going to help me in every class I have to take from this time on: I'm more relaxed, I'm more confident; and I'm better informed."

Self-Assessment Succeeds

Self-assessment using expressive writing and the believing game succeeded. The believing game and expressive writing empowered students to replace writing and computer anxiety with confidence and knowledge. Their responses revealed that feelings were important to successful writing, especially their need to feel safe about the writing community and computers. The computer classroom became safe; students feel believed in, comfortable and confident about their writing, empowered by daily writing and daily self-assessment. They saw themselves in control of their writing and computers. They also developed fluency in the Writer's Notebook, control

and precision in their transactional writing, some of which grew directly from Writer's Notebook assignments. Overall, the course grade point average this semester with daily self-assessment was higher than in previous semesters when self-assessment occurred sporadically.

Appendix A

Writer's Notebook

What is a Writer's Notebook? You are a professional writer in training, and your Writer's Notebook is a place for your daily workout. In it, you practice writing and thinking about professional writing. It's also a place to discover and make meaning for yourself, as well as a place to organize ideas and to see your progress as a professional writer. We'll be doing some of the writing in class, but you'll do most outside of class. In addition, you'll use your Writer's Notebook for writing your midsemester test and your final exam.

Save everything from this class in your Writer's Notebook: practice writing, handouts, drafts, peer comments, etc. Put everything in chronological order within the sections you designate for your notebook. Be sure that each page is dated.

How to write. From time to time, you'll get a page of practice writing assignments. Write at least one page for each day. The point is to think, discover, and learn on paper without worrying about the mechanics of writing. Within the limits of the assignment, the goals are to make a sincere effort, to respond honestly, to express feelings, to explore new ideas, and to grow as a writer.

When to write. Write so that you make each deadline--the beginning of class. To get credit, you must place your completed assignments (name and date in the upper right corner, at least one page for each one) in the notebook before it closes. Otherwise, you'll get a zero for those assignments; there are no late Writer's Notebook exercises and no excuses. You do, however, have 3 free zeros.

Response. I'll see your notebook pages each week and respond as your writing coach, much as a cross country coach might comment during laps around the track, interval training, and stretching exercises. One page of a sincere effort to respond to the assignment will give you credit for the assignment. Otherwise, what you say doesn't affect your credit. As you'll soon see, this response differs from an evaluation of your final copy, which could be compared to the official's decision at a 10k race, a judgment on your performance.

Adapted from *Teaching with Writing* by Toby Fulwiler (Boynton/Cook, 1987)
NTZ, 9/88

Appendix B

Prompts

September

1 After you review the handout, make a list of items you don't understand and the questions you have about the course.

6 After you buy books and supplies, read the handouts, and browse through our text, reflect on the semester ahead. Consider such things as reasons for taking this class, the strengths you bring to it, the strengths you need to get from it, your experiences and feelings about a writing workshop in a computer lab and anything else that is important to you. Then reread your writing and list at least 3 goals for this semester. Be as specific as you can.

8 Read Chapter 1, "The Writing Process," and write a response.

13 As a professional writer-in-training, probe your learning from experience. Here's a result of such probing--the beginning of Eudora Welty's *One Writer's Beginnings* :

"In our house on North Congress Street in Jackson, Mississippi,where I was born, the oldest of three children, in 1909, we grew up to the striking of clocks.There was a mission-style oak grandfather clock standing in the hall, which sent its gong-like strokes through the livingroom, diningroom, kitchen, and pantry, and up the sounding board of the stairwell. Through the night, it could find its way into our ears; sometimes, even on the sleeping porch, midnight could wake us up. My parents' bedroom had a smaller striking clock that answered it. Though the kitchen clock did nothing but show the time, the dining room clock was a cuckoo clock with weights on long chains, on one of which my baby brother, after climbing on a chair to the top of the china closet, once succeeded in suspending the cat for a moment. I don't know whether or not my father's Ohio family, in having been Swiss back in the 1700's before the first three Welty brothers came to America, had anything to do with this; but we all of us have been time-minded all our lives. This was good at least for a future fiction writer, being able to learn so penetratingly, and almost first of all, about chronology. It was one of a good many things I learned almost without knowing it; it would be there when I needed it."

Reflecting on your own writing process from the questionnaire, our discussions, and your reading, what have you "learned almost without knowing it"? Write a response.

15 Read Chapter 2, "Purpose and Audience," and write a response.

20 Choosing <u>one</u> of the good things that's happened at USD this year, write three letters (just the body; not to worry about form now) to <u>one person</u> from each of these three different audiences about the same good thing. Some audience examples:

<u>General Public</u>: editor of (hometown) newspaper
<u>Subordinates and Clients</u>: an elementary or junior high student
<u>Bosses and Superiors</u>: <u>one</u> faculty member, department chair, dean, vice president <u>or</u> president

As you reread your letters, mark and label specific examples of what you did to adapt the same material to three different audiences. What did you learn?

DO THE NEXT WRITINGS ON THE MAC. Write how the Mac affects your writing process at the end of your practice writing.

• Experiment with "invisible writing" by turning down the screen (the control is about two inches down and back from the rainbow Apple. Some writers feel freer not seeing what they're writing; others worry more. How successful are you at composing electronically (without previous thinking or writing)?

• Experiment with different fonts (**Font Menu**), styles and sizes (**Style Menu**)

22 Read Chapter 3, "Evidence," and write a response.

27 Today's assignment is based on brief readings from two works in the ID Weeks Library:

• In the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (HF/5381/.A/036) found in the reference section on the first floor, find the job outlook through the mid-nineties for your intended career and other information of interest, including the address at the end. **Copy the address.**

• In*Working* by Studs Terkel (HD/8072/.T4) on two-hour reserve or on third floor, read a selection (one person's account) related to your field. (Use your imagination for "related." You could read about an employee in the field or a person who represents a potential client.) Write a response.

29 Read Chapter 4, "Organization and Format ," and write a response.

October

4 Read Chapter 5, "Revision," and write a response.

6 Dialogue with the professor. Move the responses you've received so far to a new page. Respond to them in a **memo** (a memo because this is an internal communication) to NTZ. Use the memo design from the **Scrapbook** (Apple Menu) and the memo form on page 89. Include your page of responses with your memo.

Your response may be an answer to a question, an analysis of the responses in terms of your learning so far, a commentary, or whatever you want to say.

11 Read Chapter 13, "Words," and do exercises 3 and 4, on pages 318-320. They are already on-line; just copy the document **300--Oct. 11** to your disk.

13 Read Chapter 14, "Getting It Right: Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling," and do exercises 2, 3, and 4 on pages 334-336. They are already on-line; just copy the document **300--Oct. 13** to your disk.

18 Assess your learning and your feelings now about writing in this class: writing on the Mac, writing collaboratively, writing in a computer classroom, getting frequent responses to your writing, practicing a lot before being graded, and how you're learning, for example. Write a memo of your midsemester assessment to NTZ.

Class meets today (OCTOBER 18) in Dakota 201. Bring your entire Writer's Notebook and *Writing for Business and Industry* for the midsemester test. (The lab will be open as usual from 10:45-11:45.)

20 Read Chapter 12, "Reports," and write about possibilities for your own report for this class. I don't expect you to have a complete proposal, just some speculation on what you'd like to do on a problem you have some knowledge of and on which your writing will make some difference--an improvement you'd like to see at USD, for example. Include comments on some or all of these items: your present knowledge of the issue, questions you have, research you could do, names of key persons you could interview, problems you foresee.

Class meets in the ID Weeks Library today (October 20) for exploratory research for reports.

25 After you do your preliminary research in the library, write a memo to NTZ about how you spent your hour and fifteen minutes of class time. Consider suresponding to some of the following questions: How efficient a researcher are you? What was easy? Who helped you? What new discoveries did you make? Where did you have trouble? How has your original idea for a report changed? What questions do you have about the report assignment?

27 Read Chapter 7, "Messages That Inform," and rewrite any 2 of these letterson pages 165-171: **B, E, F, J**. They are already on-line; just copy the document **300--Oct. 27** to your disk.

November

1 Read Chapter 8, "Messages That Persuade," and do exercise 1 on pages 186-189.

Your report gives you the opportunity to learn something that interests you and also to influence change. Possibilities for your project may surface from entries in your Writer's Notebook, from discussions with fellow students, or from other sources. If you really feel stuck, look at the list on page 286, #2.

Like most professional writing situations, this one demands that you compile a bank of information (yours will be in your Writer's Notebook) and then draw from it for the audience you designate for your report. Keep a log of the project in your Writer's Notebook, which begins with a page (due November 3) on your writing process and progress toward writing this proposal. Include all time you spent as part of the log.

3 Log 1

8 Your proposal is due today (6x usual process credit). Enjoy the good feelings of completing a major step.

10 Log 2, including your report's connections to Chapter 9, "Visuals"

15 Log 3

17 A draft of the body is due for peer review in class today (6x usual process credit).

22 The whole report is due for peer review today (6x usual process credit)

23 Log 4 and your final report are due at noon today in my office, Dakota 230. Happy Thanksgiving! You have earned a vacation.

December

1 Read Chapter 6, "Resumes and Cover Letters," and write a response.

6 Create or find a job description and draft your resume and cover letter to match it. Use Chapter 6 as a reference, especially the descriptive words on pages 125-6 and general advice from

Chapter 6 as a reference, especially the descriptive words on pages 125-6 and general advice from pages 110-125.

8 Write your functional resume for the same job description, using advice on pages 134-136.

13 Do exercises 1 and 2 on pages 142-144 and any 3 examples from exercise 3 on pages 144-145.

16 Bring your entire *Writer's Notebook* to the Maclab to write your final at the time you signed for.

Final Assessment

Choose one of these to write on:

1. A memo to me assessing how well you made the change from academic to professional writing. Assess your growth in terms of the goals for the course as well as your personal goals (September 8). For evidence, quote from your *Writer's Notebook* and provide dates.

2. A report to a potential employer. Congratulations! your resume succeeded. You made the first cut, and now your potential employer has asked for additional information to help decide whom to interview. You are asked to write a report specifying how the skills you acquired in this course, which you listed on your resume, will actually benefit the employer. Include evidence: you can attach assignments and/or quote from your *Writer's Notebook*.

3. A proposal to me for the next English 300 class taught in the Maclab. Consider such issues as what *Writer's Notebook* assignments were most valuable and which were least valuable. How was your learning best facilitated? Was the textbook helpful? For evidence, show the kinds of learning that took place from the things that helped you the most, and rewrite or write the additions you propose.

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Appendix C

WHAT IS A RESPONSE?

A response has many forms. What is important is that it provides a way for you to think about what you're learning, to question what you don't understand, and to integrate new concepts and ideas with what you already know (making a new map). This writing is expressive writing; therefore, don't worry about mechanical correctness or spelling. Deal with ideas and questions instead, so that you're ***thinking*** and ***learning*** on paper. If you feel like writing beyond the minimum requirement, write on, and celebrate writing to learn.

Choose from these possibilities for your response:

- A summary of what *you* consider to be the important points.
- An example from your own experience of how some aspect of this works (or doesn't).
- An explanation of new concepts and ideas. How does new information fit in with what you already know?
- An explanation of new concepts to someone else. Specify a particular audience--a student who has been absent, for example, or a younger student, or someone in your profession -- and give the most significant points you think *they* ought to be concerned with.
- An argument with the authors about some particular point (or points).
- Questions about what you don't understand. Try to get material straight when you're confused by writing questions and suggesting possible answers.
- Questions about the significance of what you've learned.
- A comparison of a "traditional" with a "writing-to-learn" method of learning the material.
- Or any other kind of response that seems useful to you as a means of strengthening, personalizing and extending the learning process that you began when you started the assignment

NTZ 9/88 (adapted from Mayher, Lester, and Pradl, *Learning to Write/Writing to Learn*, 81)

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